

**Thomas Jefferson to William Short, November 15,
1807, from the Thomas Jefferson and William Short
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

Thomas Jefferson to William Short

Washington Nov. 15. 07

Dear Sir

Your's of the 6th has been duly recieved on the subject of your location for the winter, it is impossible, in my view of it to doubt on the preference which should be given to this place, under any circumstances it could not but be satisfactory to you to acquire an intimate knolege of our political machine, not merely of it's organisation, but the individuals & characters composing it, their general modes of thinking, & of acting, openly & secretly, of all this you can learn no more at Philadelphia than of a diet of the empire. None but an eye- witness can really understand it, and it is quite as important to be known to them, & to obtain a certain degree of their confidence in your own right. In a government likes ours the standing of a man well with this portion of the public must weigh against a considerable difference of other qualifications. Your quarters here may not perhaps be quite so comfortable as at Philadelphia there is a good house halfway between this & the treasury, where Genl. Dearborne, Mr. & Mrs. Cutts board together. I do not know if there is a vacancy in it, but there are houses all along the Avenue convenient to the Capitol & to this house also to come & take your soup with us every day, when not otherwise engaged.

Our affairs with Spain laid dormant during the absence of Bonaparte from Paris because we knew Spain would do nothing towards settling them but by compulsion. Immediately

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on his return our terms were stated to him, and his interposition obtained. It was with good faith, it's effect will be instantaneous, if not with good faith, we shall discover it by affected delays, and must decide accordingly. I think a few weeks will clear up this matter. With England all is uncertain. The late shift by Capt. Doane is merely a counterbalance for the shift a week before of a contrary aspect. Those dialogues they put into

the mouths of the ministers were not likely to be communicated to the newswriters, and they are founded on a falsehood within my knolege not that I have confidence in an amicable arrangement with England, but I have not the less on account of this information. One circumstance only in it I view as very possible, that she may by proclamation forbid all commerce with her enemies, which is equivalent to forbidding it with any nation but herself. As her commerce could not be accepted on such terms, this will be as much a war as she could wage if she were to declare war, for she can wage only a maritime war with us. In such a case we could not let the war be all on one side, but must certainly endeavor at as much indemnification, as we could take if we have war with her, we shall need no loan the 1st year, a domestic loan only the 2d year, but after that foreign loans. The moment the war is decided, we shall think it necessary to take measures to ensure these by the time they are wanted and your management of this kind of business formerly is known to have been so advantageous, that we should certainly wish to avail ourselves of your services if they can be obtained conformably to our joint views. But nothing specific can be said until the denouement of our present situation. No inference can be drawn from Monroe's return (which I dare say will be by the Revenée) because his return this autumn had been earnestly solicited by him and agreed to by use. The classification of our militia will be again proposed, on a better plan, and with more probable success. With respect to Genl. Moreau, no one entertains a more cordial esteem for his character than I do; and altho' our relations with France have rendered it a duty in me not to seek any public manifestation of it, yet were accident to bring us together, I could not be so much venting to my own sentiments & those of my constituents individually, as

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to omit a cordial manifestation of it.

While at Monticello, I made every enquiry possible, and could find no person worthy, & willing to undertake the superintendence of your tenants. I could hear of no one whose integrity & understanding qualified them for it, & who was not already in other business which occupied them exclusively. I have myself found it very unprofitable to have small tenants, because each of them requires more watching than a single tenant who should occupy the whole, but I think that Price is in that situation, & exactly that kind of man who can & will overlook them minutely & hold them to the conditions of their leases. I dare say he may be deficient in the form of his accounts, but whether he is capable of making you understand them or not, they will always be honest, & you may be sure of receiving every farthing which is your due. Still it is unsatisfactory not to see every thing clearly on paper. If a more satisfactory character should turn up, I will not fail to apprise you of it. Accept my assurances of constant affection & respect. Th. Jefferson

FC (Jefferson Papers, DLC)